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PP RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH
DE RUEHGO #1153 3341058

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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6902

INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE

RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE

RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0743

RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4293

RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7834

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5394

RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI

RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 3412

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1192

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 001153

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STATE FOR EAP AND IO; PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/20/2017

TAGS: PGOV PREL PHUM BM

SUBJECT: HARSHSHIP AND HEARTACHE IN BURMA

REF: RANGOON 1009

Classified By: Pol Officer Sean O'Neill for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

¶1. (SBU) Summary. The end of November brought nothing but more hardship to the Burmese people and their beleaguered pro-democracy movement. Authorities obstructed a peaceful procession, closed an important monastery, and prevented a political prisoner from visiting his dying mother. They did not, however, engage in any serious dialogue. End Summary.

¶2. (C) NLD member Min Thant told us that authorities in Mogok Township north of Mandalay prevented a group of monks from staging a peaceful procession to a local pagoda on November 30. Approximately 360 monks from the Tha De Pa Htan monastery in Mogok planned to march from their monastery to the nearby Chan Thar Gyi Pagoda to pray for those arrested and killed in the regime's ongoing crackdown. However, monastery members said that police and intelligence officers learned of the plan last night and warned the chief monk to cancel the procession. Min Thant reported that police and soldiers surrounded the monastery this morning and ordered all monks to remain inside. Approximately 15 young monks attempted to leave the monastery to start the march but quickly retreated when soldiers leveled their weapons at them, according to witnesses. We received no reports of violence or injuries although Min Thant informed local monk U Thi Nein Da is now in hiding and on the run from police.

¶3. (C) On November 29, imprisoned 88 Generation Students' activist Htay Kywe's mother passed away from complications due to cancer. His sister told us she would petition prison authorities to allow Htay Kywe to attend his mother's funeral, but was not hopeful. Htay Kywe had not seen his mother since police arrested him on October 12. Family members were permitted to visit Htay Kywe and other 88GS detainees for the first time on November 21 but his mother was too ill to attend the 20-minute family reunion at Insein Prison.

¶4. (C) On November 29, authorities closed Rangoon's Magin Monastery as they had threatened. In a recorded interview delivered to the Embassy today, the over eighty-year-old senior monk, U Kaytu, said he pleaded with authorities to allow him and his novice monks to stay in the monastery just

a few weeks longer, explaining they have no place else to go.

The authorities refused and threw them out at 4 p.m. yesterday. Local residents expressed concern for U Kaytu's well-being, pointing out he has been in frail health and emotionally distraught since his son, Maggin's chief monk Sayardaw U Indaka, was arrested in the September crackdown. Maggin Monastery had been raided four times since September's crackdown. It formerly housed over 50 monks and provided hospice care to 15 HIV/AIDS patients, all of whom were evicted by authorities on October 9 (reftel).

¶5. (C) Comment. This was another very bad week for the Burmese people. Our contacts and local staff have increasingly commented on the wanton callousness of the regime's actions. Several pointed out that closing a respected monastery and evicting an octogenarian monk were particularly shocking acts, even for the Than Shwe regime. There is a risk that some in the international community may grow weary of these continuous stories of cruelty and loose focus. We must make sure they do not. End Comment.

STOLTZ